

THE INSTRUCTIONAL MENU

by Marsha Miller



Esther Grassian's and Joan Kaplowitz's wonderful text, *Information Literacy Instruction: Theory and Practice*, devotes a chapter to the "Instructional Menu", referring to the many 'modes' we use to try to get 'information literacy' across.

Chapter nine highlights the pros and cons of the instructional modes included. But, how often do instruction librarians tie the mode to the type of activity, either consciously or subliminally? Since information literacy is not done in a vacuum, usually the purpose of putting information literacy skills to use is because the person has a goal in mind. In academia, that goal is usually an assignment. Most often informa-

tion literacy instruction is tied to that traditional, and tired, manifestation, the 'research paper.' But we know that there are many different sorts of assignments, some because of the academic discipline, some because of the level of student, and some because a teacher and a librarian have worked together to format a new assignment. The instructional menu below has grown in the years since the Grassian/Kaplowitz text have been published. The author of this article began a conscious effort to identify as many research/writing, etc. activities as she could. The result has been fun. See what you can do with this list. If you can think of other items to include in either column, please let the author know!

Instructional Menu

1. Signage: the Printing instructions
2. Self-guided tours: ours
3. Chalkboard/Whiteboard/Smartboard
4. Flip charts
5. Posters
6. PowerPoints
7. Videotapes [Passé? Retro?]
8. Just audio? aka MP3-type recordings
9. 'Just' a Handout
10. Point of use: legal research/legal abbreviations
11. Pathfinders
12. Exercises
13. Tutorials
14. Concept Maps
15. Course Management Systems; e.g. Blackboard/WebCT; OnCourse (a product used at Indiana University)
16. Formal courses
17. Discussion boards & chat [do they really work?]
18. Web sites
19. Streaming media examples
20. Blogs, RSS feeds
21. Portal Channels
22. Podcasting; screencasting; vidcasting
23. Learning Objects
24. Digital learning materials [DLMS]: no physical format; include all types of textual and audiovisual file types such as HTML Script, Flash, JavaScript, AVI, WMV, MP3, WAV, JPEG, TIFF, and more

Type of Activity We're Supporting

1. General orientation information
2. Simple signage
3. Basic skills [purely library or computer/technology too?]
4. Types of academic writing:
 - a) Information writing assignment
 - b) 'Extended' assignment
 - c) Case study
 - d) Review
 - e) Technical report
 - f) Lab report
 - g) Book report
 - h) Critical analysis/critique
 - i) Bibliography
 - j) Annotated bibliography
 - k) Literature review
 - l) Term paper
 - m) Research paper
 - a. Short
 - b. Argumentative
 - n) Position/opinion paper
 - o) Essay
 - a. Definitional essay
 - b. expository
 - p) Subject outline
 - q) Statistical summary
 - r) Senior thesis
 - s) Grant writing
 - t) E-mail
 - u) Web writing
 - v) Oral presentation of written report
 - w) PowerPoint presentation [yes, this is academic 'writing', too!]
 - x) Historical research [primary & secondary sources]
 - y) Midterm/final exam essay
 - z) Resume & other 'business' writing
 - aa) Experiential Learning support
 - bb) Service Learning support
5. Independent study/Lifelong learning
6. Other?

REFERENCES

Grassian, E. & Kaplowitz, J. (2001) *Information literacy instruction: theory and practice*. New York: Neal-Schuman.